

# New Issaquah Law: Food Service Packaging and Recycling

In 2009, the Issaquah City Council adopted a new law to help protect the environment by avoiding the use of polystyrene and non-recyclable disposable food service packaging. Updates were made in September 2010.

## **By October 1, 2010**

- The law prohibits food service businesses from using polystyrene foam (Styrofoam™) and non-recyclable or non-compostable packaging and service ware in connection with food service in Issaquah. Multiple alternatives (several below) are available that can be recycled or composted.
- Businesses must also participate in a commercial food waste composting program. Recycling and compost containers for consumers are required where food is served for consumption on premise in disposable packaging.

## **Benefits:**

- Businesses and residents can reduce trash volumes and service costs.
- Reducing garbage through compost and recycling can save businesses up to 50 percent - or more - on garbage service costs.



**No Styrofoam**

## **Free assistance:**

During this transition, **free assistance** is available to Issaquah businesses, such as:

- Finding suitable food service ware
- Identifying reductions in garbage
- On-site training for staff
- Setting up food recycling programs
- Free indoor containers, signage, etc.

## **Some examples of recyclable and compostable products include:**



**For more information or to request assistance, contact:**

**425-837-3400 ~ [www.ci.issaquah.wa.us/packaging](http://www.ci.issaquah.wa.us/packaging) ~ [rco@ci.issaquah.wa.us](mailto:rco@ci.issaquah.wa.us)**

# New Food Service Packaging Law: Frequently Asked Questions

## What are the requirements of the new law?

The law prohibits food service businesses from using polystyrene foam (Styrofoam™) and non-recyclable or non-compostable packaging and service ware in connection with food service in Issaquah.

Foods that are pre-packaged before they are received by a business are not included in the law.

Food service businesses must also participate in a commercial food waste recycling program or provide recycling and compost containers for consumers and ensure those materials are recycled or composted.

## Who has to follow the new law?

Restaurants, coffee shops, cafes, cafeterias, delis, grocery stores, quick-serve food establishments, caterers, vendors at fairs, food trucks, all City facilities, contractors and other food service businesses must follow this law.

## When does the law go into effect?

**By October 1, 2010, all food service businesses must comply with the new law.**

The law provides temporary exemptions for, cutlery (forks, spoons and knives), foil backed and composite papers, straws, cocktail picks, and small portion cups. On July 1, 2012 these exemptions will expire and businesses will be required to fully comply.

## Why was the law changed?

While polystyrene foam food packaging and service ware is often used and disposed of within minutes or days, it continues to exist in the environment for thousands of years, and can lead to devastating effects, such as pollution and harm to animal life. Locally, there are no meaningful ways of recycling polystyrene foam food packaging.

## What can I do to reduce waste from food service?

- Allow and encourage customers to bring their own mugs or reusable containers for take-out use. Consider offering a discount to those customers.
- Use reusable service ware instead of disposable products for eat-in customers.

## What products are allowed?

Compostable products:

- A large number of products made with paper, plant fiber, corn, soy, potato starch, sugarcane, rice, bamboo and other resources are compostable. All compostable products must meet the City's program standards and be accepted by the regional compost facility, Cedar Grove. A full list of compostable products is available online at [www.cedar-grove.com/acceptable/Accepted%20List.asp](http://www.cedar-grove.com/acceptable/Accepted%20List.asp) or by calling 425-837-3400.
- Bio-plastics, such as "PLA" clear plastic, are allowed provided they meet the City's program standards. No plastic or foam coatings are allowed.

Recyclable products:

- Clean aluminum (foil or trays must be free of food), plastic bottles, plastic jugs, plastic tubs, milk cartons, clean polycoated cups (such as clean paper coffee cups), clean plastic clamshell containers are recyclable. All recyclable products must meet the City's program standards. A full list of recyclable products is available online at [www.ci.issaquah.wa.us/rco](http://www.ci.issaquah.wa.us/rco).

## Where can I purchase these products?

Ask your current supplier, as all major food service distributors now carry compostable and recyclable products that meet the City's program requirements. In addition, the City is exploring the feasibility of a local purchasing cooperative for small businesses.

## How do I set up or improve my recycling service?

Contact the Issaquah Resource Conservation Office for free assistance, including waste audits, free signs, staff training, free recycling containers, free compostable can liners and other resources.

As part of basic garbage service, businesses are provided with a free recycling service up to 200 percent of your garbage collection container size.

More information is online at [www.ci.issaquah.wa.us/packaging](http://www.ci.issaquah.wa.us/packaging)

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